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THE
LAY-MAN'S
ANSWER
TO THE
LAY-MAN'S
OPINION:

In a Letter to a Friend.



L O N D O N :

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SIR,

Since you desire to know my Opinion of the *Lay-Mans Advice*, &c. I will give it you with all the freedom in the world ; and let you know first, that there is greater reason for your curiosity than you imagined ; for this Paper is a Court-Favourite, and handed from one to another with all the gayety and scornful triumph imaginable. One is of opinion, that it is Unanswerable by way of Argument ; Another, that

all the Wits in the Land can have nothing to say to it ; a third, defies all our Criticks from discovering the Author by its style ; and a fourth (a great Divine, and very considerable upon several accounts) confirms all they say, with this bold assurance, that the Author is a most worthy Gentleman, and an incomparable Scholar, and thus it went round *Nemine contradicente*. To you, who are no Stranger there, I shall not need to observe, that judgments commonly pass about like Healths, not because we really love the Persons, but because we would be civil to the company, and complaisant to him who began. But this is not what you must expect from Me, who judge with my own judgment, be it good or bad ; and such as it is, you shall have it.

I tell you then, the design of this, and a great many other Pamphlets scattered of late, is, to expose the Church of *England* to the Royal Indignation, and to tempt and provoke her Sons to such measures, as might justly draw it down upon her. It is plain, the Authors and Abettors themselves of these insolent and villainous Papers, are not so well satisfied that the Church of *England* either has been, or is Disloyal, as they would be, to have her so indeed. For, concluding the gracious Promise of the King, at his first coming to the Crown, and his frequently repeated Assurances of his Royal Protection since, to be purely conditional, the general endeavour now is, to demonstrate the failures of the Church on her part, and to acquit the other from any farther obligation : And because these failures cannot possibly be proved, they are by all possible means to be provoked. But God is Just, and will not forget these things ; the King is Wise, and will not be imposed on by them ; the Church is Loyal, and will always be so, in despite of them. I shall say no more in general, than that it is certainly a sad and fatal token of confusion and disorder to succeed, when the only lawfully establish'd Church-Government in the Nation, is by publick allowance made the Mark for every foolish and malicious Villain to discharge their bolts at.

Your

Your Author in his first period, would fain pass for a Modest Man, and very sensible of his own inabilities; but he shall not pass for the first with me, who has so well convinced me of the later, and yet would venture.

“ He says next, the Considerable Divine desires to know his opinion of the Church of *England's* Proceedings in this extraordinary conjuncture, and what he intended to do himself, as well as advise the Divine to do on this Occasion. Whoever this Considerable Divine be, he shall know of this *Lay-Oracle* only one of the three things he desires, and that is, his Opinion of the Church of *England*, which is scurvy enough, and therefore this modest Man is very loath to deliver it. *He is still an unworthy Member of the Church of England, and consequently loves it with all its faults, What a sweet, good-natur'd Gentleman is this! troth, I believe he is extremely sorry that she has no more faults, that he might shew his affection more abundantly towards her. But because he loves her so, 'Tis not to be imagined how concerned he is for the thousand indiscretions she commits, which her Enemies will find another Name for, if persisted in.* Oh for some powerful drops, to relieve this Gentleman, who otherwise will die of Concern, and prove a Martyr for the Church of *England's* Indiscretion. But what trifling Cant is this! how ridiculous is this affectation of kindness and concern for the Church of *England*, when he is intending all the mischief for her, that his impotent malice can suggest? The Church of *England* is not careful, whether such Authors be treacherous Mungrels, or open and avowed Adversaries. She looks for all the ill treatment, that the damnable hypocrisie, and the raging fury of the one and the other, can afford her.

And now we are come to her Faults and Indiscretions. *Did we not in both Houses of Parliament oppose the King's giving Employments to his Friends and Fellow-Sufferers, and not only so, but highly reflected on his Honour and Justice in doing it?* It is very well, when the insolence of every licentious Scribler shall prescribe to, and call in question
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the Proceedings of the most August and Noble Council in the Kingdom, for following the Dictates of their Conscience, and their best reason! How long have the Debates in Parliament been called, *Opposing the King*, when his Desires do not meet with present compliance? Is the Representing to His Majesty the Inconveniencies of what he asks, (which multiplicity of Affairs may cause a Wise Prince sometimes to overlook) to be call'd Reflecting on his Honour and Justice? I am sure, it would highly reflect on his Wisdom and Goodness, to think so of His Majesty, and therefore every good Subject will be far from it.

After this magisterial Sentence pass'd upon the High Court of Parliament, the Venerable Body of the Clergy are to have their share. *Have not a great many of our Considerable Clergy-men been declaiming once a Week against the Roman Catholicks?* They have, as it happened, Preach'd up the Worship of One God, the Sufficiency of Christ's Satisfaction, and Intercession for us, the Necessity of Adhering to our Saviour's Institutions, and some other the like Points, and sure it is no great compliment to their Persuasion, to call this declaiming against *Roman Catholicks*.

But the Roman Catholicks are all this while either very modest, or forbid to follow so indiscreet an Example, though they have the advantage of bearing the King before them as a Buckler. Not so very modest neither, as some of their Audience can testify; but granting them to have been somewhat reserv'd there, they have made us ample amends in other places; and have not neglected to oppose to us, on several Occasions, this Royal Buckler, here mention'd; which, upon my word, in these Paper-Combates, has guarded them from many a fell and furious Stroak, and served them for a safe Retreat: So profound a Veneration has our Church for any thing that bears the Royal Stamp.

Next to the Parliament and Clergy, come the *Universities themselves, those Meer Creatures of Power and Favour, and fly in the Face of Authority, and, like the Snake in the Fable, sting that Bosom that warms them.*

The Universities are proud of the Royal Favour, and daily study to be thought deserving of it. They have their Charters, as other Corporations of the Kingdom have; and several Privileges and Immunities granted them by Acts of Parliaments. And it is at present, their Misfortune, I dare say, to find themselves obliged by all those Tyes that are common to them, with the rest of the King's Subjects, and some peculiar to themselves too, not to be able to answer the King's Expectations, in the Matter before them, whose Grace they would gladly purchase, with the Price of all they have, that is dear to them in this World. And they are in hopes, that it will not be in the Power of any their Malevolent Adversaries to interpose betwixt the Royal Clemency and them.

After the Parliament, Clergy, and Universities are confounded on this manner, he has nothing to do, but return to his Considerable Divine, and make him confess the truth of the whole Charge, in a very lamentable manner truly, with a sad wipe to the Church of *England*, for not pretending to Infallibility; for matters are now come to that pass, that a man will hardly venture to call a Hackney-Coach, before he be infallibly assured, it will bring him to his Journey's end; and a Coach-man will hardly come, unless he be infallibly sure not to be bilk'd; to so great certainties are we arrived in Matters of Practice. Well, but does this Considerable Divine give no reason for all this Obstinate Rebellious Opposition? Yes he does, and 'tis this: *By serving the King, we only ensnare ourselves in assisting the Church of Rome, which is endeavouring our ruine.* A very considering Divine certainly! I hope there are not many such in *England*, that think they cannot serve the King, without ruining themselves, or that would not serve him, were their ruine unavoidable;

avoidable; but, God be thanked, things are not come to that yet; there always was, and always will be, a great difference betwixt Serving the King, and Betraying ones Trust; 'tis a scandalous kind of Blasphemy, to affix that Sacred Name, to a restless and ambitious Faction: Matters may easily be thus accommodated; The King's Intentions are always Honourable and Just, and we will always serve him, as in Duty bound, with most Unparallel'd Fidelity. If the *Roman Catholics* are endeavouring our Ruine, we will meet with them too, in all the Lawful Methods of Peaceable and Just Defence. Let them grow wanton in these days of Sun-shine, if they please, but let them not, amidst their Gaiety, forget they have to deal with neither Slaves nor Fools. If you are not convinced by what is past, you will be by what is to come, that the Author of this Pamphlet made this Considerable Divine himself, and his Reason too, for certainly the Church of *England* owns none such; for thus it goes on: *For if to the Zeal, Magnanimity, and Indefatigable Industry of the King, we add the heightning his Prerogative, and the firmness of all his Protestant Subjects both in his Armies and Parliament, what imaginable Hopes is there to put the least delay to an Universal Change of Religion?*

Did ever any Mortal Man hear such a weighty Reason as this? Take it in other words thus: The Church of *England* apprehends it is utterly impossible, but that her Establishment must be overthrown, and Popery set up, if a Protestant Army, and a Protestant Parliament be firm to the King, especially since he is so excellently qualified.

Now, as I am an honest Man, I think this Church argues like a great Fool, and ought to have concluded just the contrary. And now, after all, the Pamphleteer has the ridiculous Impudence to tell us, *he has put the Objection fairly, and as strongly as the Case will bear*: whereas you see there is no Objection at all, and indeed the Case of the Church of *England* requires and needs none; but if
this

this had not been put here, the Author would not have had one word to say, and then he could not have told us, that *supposing the King had a design to resettle Popery, he is sure we are bound in Conscience to be entirely passive, in all things so designed by him.* The Church of England will never think herself at liberty to suppose any such thing, as a design to resettle *Popery*, till the King is pleased to tell her so: and both then, and till then, she will behave herself as she ought to do. If ever such a thing (as it is an impious thought to think) should happen, she knows how to practice upon those Principles she has formerly and all along so advantageously promoted for the Royal Interest.

In the next place, the Author fancies the Clergy compounding the Matter, thus, that in Secular things they will assist the State all they can, but where their Church is concerned, they must beg the State's pardon, and oppose a little, or so: and, as if it were agreed on, he desires to know how far this Opposition may proceed. Not to Arms? no, by no means: how far then? why thus far, *in Pulpits to exclaim against the Religion of our Sovereign, and brand it with Idolatry itself, a Mark, like that of Cain to invite every body to do him a mischief.* I wish this Author were oblig'd to bring the Man, that in his Pulpit has, in so many words, asserted the Religion of the King to be Idolatry, and left any such Insinuation in his Audience, as though the Mark of *Cain* were set upon him; or were obliged to answer for so villanous a Calumny on so great a Body, when so many Millions of *Protestants*, as are throughout the World, are damned to Everlasting Perdition, for they know not what, by every little *Roman* Emissary; we can pity their Uncharitableness, but I know of no private person, that thinks himself affronted, or abused thereby; and yet damnation is the utmost that the Idolatry of the *Heathens* themselves can suffer: and as for any danger in this World, it is not the Church of *England*, that threatens it to Kings,

but it is *another Church*, and she has often set her Marks with a vengeance.

The next Period, is another sling at the Universities; which would make one think, the Butler, or the Beadle, did not very well agree with him there.

But now for the Gentlemen that would not take away the Test and Penal Laws.

With some of whom, it is a point of Conscience, on that account, to quit those Places, to which they had no other pretence of Merit, but their having opposed those Laws formerly, which yet, out of a fatal stubbornness, they refuse now to Repeal.

Did you ever hear such a grievous Accusation in your whole Life? Don't you think these Gentlemen are the greatest Knaves and Villains on the Earth? You will certainly think so, when you have more closely attended to the force of this reason. And thus it runs:

“ There were, some Years ago, a great many well-meaning Men, that could by no means assent to some certain Laws then making against *Papists*, and they opposed their Passing as vigorously as they could, and this their Zeal, though unsuccessful, was yet thought fit to be rewarded with some considerable Offices. Matters changing, some time after, it was proposed to these same Gentlemen, to take away these Laws, they had before opposed; but they, having in the mean time been convinced, that these Laws were not only serviceable to the Publick then, but were since become necessary, refuse to repeal them, and are content to resign their Places, both Honourable and Beneficial, rather than comply with what they judged inconvenient to the State, freely sacrificing the Rewards of their former Vertue, to preserve their present one. And these are the Men so loudly exclaimed against. But, good God! in what dregs of time do we live? when that Probity and Courage, which in any other Age would have deserved a Statue, does in this furnish Matter for a Libel! *Non & olim sic erit.*

Well

Well then, if Men cannot part with their Places, without giving offence, sure they may keep them innocently; for to an ordinary understanding, there seems to be no *Medium*; No, but you must not do this neither, if you chance to *squint, whisper, or look slyly*, for then it will be construed as done *with contempt of all your Master does or designs*.

'Tis very strange, that a Man can't squint, or look a little slyly at Court, and be all the while a very good Subject! But this is too malicious a Reflection on the present Courtiers, to make merry withal. Those worthy Gentlemen are wise enough to see this is only one of the many sly Insinuations, of some malicious Viper, that wants a Place himself; 'twere much beneath the meanest of them, to slacken either in their Service to the King, or Duty to the Church, for any thing that can be said, by such bold Defamers as this.

But who are they who think themselves so dextrous as to convince the King they are his Friends, though it never appeared so, before they were his Subjects? I could guess, as well as other folks, if I might, but I dare not; I will only venture to say, they were not Church-of-England-Men, and some of them at present are not such.

Ay, but these very men, whose Consciences are complaisant enough on other occasions, yet dare not venture any farther than the Threshold of the King's Chappel, to hear Sefache sing? What then? is it so very strange for a Man's Conscience to permit him quietly to pursue one evil course, and to disturb him in another? Would this Author's Conscience permit him to kill his Father, and ravish his Sister, because it permits him to slander and defame a Whole Church and Nation? I hope not.

Nay, but he does not say this so much to censure them, as to vindicate our Church, which condemns no Man for staying at Divine Service, in any Christian Congregation, but rather blames so nauseous an Affectation of Zeal and Faction.

Here he is in one of his loving fits again, and will needs be vindicating the Church of *England*, though it be at the expence of his own Truth and Honelty ; for he had before told us, that our Clergy exclaimed against the Religion of our Sovereign, and branded it with the Mark of Idolatry ; and he knows it is one part (and that a principal one too) of that Divine Service, which we can find no civilier name for. And within ten lines of this very Passage, he says the same again, and yet this is the Church that condemns no Man, &c. These things look like Contradictions.

And now let our Author sum up all. *May we not oppose the Government, and yet do all these things ?* That is, in plain *English*, thus : May we not oppose the Government, and yet our Parliaments debate Matters before them ? and yet our Clergy Preach up the 39 Articles ? and yet our Universities humbly Remonstrate to the King, the Inconveniencies of a *Mandamus* ? May we not oppose the Government, and yet some Old Courtiers resign their Places ? and yet some Others keep theirs still, though perhaps they look somewhat sily ? and yet some Faces constantly appear at the *Protestant* Chappel, which were great strangers there before ? and yet some others venture to the Threshold to hear *Sefache* sing, but dare no farther ? had we not as good be down-right Rebels, as do these horrid and unheard of things ? It may be you may think I jest, when I put this sence upon our Author's *Queries* : but, by the Faith of an Honest Man, there is nothing else in them of substance, he has only put them into spiteful and invidious Terms, for want of true Matter to furnish out an Accusation.

Here follow some more of them : *Did we pull down a Pope, to set up a King ?* The Parliament, all the Bishops but one, and the whole Convocation, pulled down the Pope, though all of them *Papists* themselves, and restored the King to his just Authority. And this Author would have a *Protestant* Parliament and Clergy set him up again. *And are we tugging with the King, to pull him down,*
and

and set up ourselves? No, not We of the Church of England, but let Others acquit themselves as well. What Pretence have We, of all the World, for doing this? None, for they who do Nothing, want no Pretence. We have no Private Spirit to guide Us, in such Dark Paths; And therefore we keep out of them, walking in the Light, as Children of the Light. We have no Infallible Council, to secure us against any Doubts of Conscience; And we have no Doubts or Objections, and therefore need no Infallible Council, but we have the Word of God our Infallible Rule. We have listed ourselves under a King ever since Henry the Eighth's time, [and about a Thousand Years before] and, like AEsop's Horse, are obliged to bear him for a Rider ever after.

We like our King so well, that we wish with all our hearts and souls there may never want of his Race to Govern us to the worlds end. We never strove to throw off our Rider, as the malice of the Author may seem to suggest, by the Fable he has chosen; but reckon ourselves securest, when our Royal Rider sits the fastest. Whom God long preserve.

And now because our Author has set me an Example out of Esop, and because Fabling is very much in fashion, I will take the liberty of presenting one, which this and other the Enemies of our Church may apply as they see good. And to recommend it the more, it is of a Panther.

*It chanc'd a Panther heedless of her feet,
Slept unawares, and fell into a Pitt;
(Whether the Pitt were dug with that design
Or not, our Authors leave us to divine.)
Which when some Churles, lab'ring at distance, knew,
Thither they with united fury flew;
Snatching such Arms as haste or made or found,
Stakes from the hedge, and Stones from off the
ground.*

These,

*These, most of them bestow'd upon the Beast,
Lab'ring for life, and almost quite oppress.
Whilst Others mild, and more compassionate,
Pitied the wretched Creatures lost estate,
And kindly threw her scraps of Bread to eat.
Concluding, as at Night they homewards made,
To find her, early in the Morning, dead.
But she recov'ring strength, made an essay,
And by a vigorous bound, escap'd away.
Homewards she fled; nor many days were past,
Before she laid the Neighb'ring Country waste:
Shepherds and Flocks were undistinguish'd slain,
And raging Vengeance foam'd around the Plain.
Then they who had in pity spar'd the Beast,
With fear and trembling to her now address;
Their Goods and Fortunes they no more regard,
But only ask to live, for their Reward.
To whom the gen'rous Panther; Friends no fear,
Rest you secure, there is no danger near:
Well I distinguish 'twixt my Friends and Foes,
And well remember who gave Bread, who Blows.*

F I N I S.

